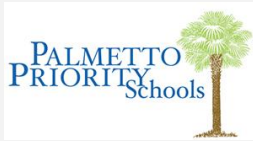


South Carolina Department of Education

Palmetto

Priority

Schools



IMPORTANT DATES

Liaison Training

July 30-31, 2009

Columbia Conference Center

Partnership Symposium

August 11, 2009

South Carolina Archives and History Center

FROM THE DESK OF...

**DAVID RAWLINSON,
DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF
SPECIAL PROJECTS**



"In order to grow, you must love truth more than your own opinion."

-Anonymous



South Carolina
Department of Education

Together, we can.

Spartanburg District Seven



Whitlock Junior High Mark it Met!

Whitlock Junior High recently culminated its third TAP cluster cycle and students met and exceeded the cycle's goal. During the third cluster cycle, teachers taught students test-taking strategies that

included "Duck the Decoy" answer and "Negative Words." Students applied these strategies in taking quizzes and tests in all of their classes. During the post-test, students applied these and other strategies to multiple-choice questions developed from informational text. The questions assessed students' mastery of identifying the main idea, supporting details, and

summarization of reading passages. The school's goal was a 25 percent improvement from pre-test to post-test, but the students met the goal with an impressive 39 percent improvement.



Home of the Warriors

Lee County

Mount Pleasant Middle School

Mt. Pleasant Middle School (MPMS) met all of the Focused School Renewal Plan goals this year. In addition, Satisfactory Implementation was met, and the State Board of Education commended the school for its gains and for meeting its goals.

Over 75 percent of all students at MPMS met their individual targeted growth in reading, mathematics,

and science as measured by the NWEA MAP assessments from spring 2008 to spring 2009. In addition approximately 50 percent of the students increased at least one RIT Band in each of the three areas tested. Another significant gain is that when NWEA normative data was compared to MPMS' actual data, the achievement gap was closed in all areas in all grades.

True progress in increasing

student achievement this year has occurred at MPMS! As a reward for the phenomenal growth, the students were given T-shirts and taken on a skating field trip to Sumter.

Students as well as teachers feel pride in their accomplishments.

The words of one student who had just learned that

(Continued on page 2)

Hampton District 2

Estill Middle Optimistic

Estill Middle School ended the year on a high note of optimism. We are looking forward to a new year filled with student successes and enjoyment of learning. Many of our students wanted to sow blessings and reap rewards for consistent efforts in all aspects of student life. Thus, our effort to build character is something we will continue to work on at the start of the school year.

Students decided they wanted to make a difference
In other people's lives,
By being thoughtful and considerate,
Being slow to criticize.
Being helpful when needed, letting others know they cared,
Being patient and forgiving

(Continued to the right)

When hurts were hard to bear.
Doing always unto others
As they'd have done unto them,
For they knew by sowing good blessings,
They'd reap the words "well done."

A long time ago, Dr. Walter L. Thomas, said, "A person who has not developed a reasonable and functional system of values is a personal and social hazard. An individual with an inadequate system of personal values will be motivated by group pressure or impulse or both. As such, he is a physical and social hazard to himself and those around him. The teacher and the school . . . is a very real partner in the resulting harvest of crime, destruction, and personal waste." We want our students to have discerning minds, be clever with articulate voices, but also to have compassionate hearts and sensitive consciences. It is the heart and conscience that will make the final difference for mankind.

Lee County (Continued)

Mount Pleasant Middle School

(Continued from Page 1)

she had met her targeted growth on the MAP test—"I feel smart now!"—exemplify the feelings of self-worth and pride that everyone is experiencing. Next year, the staff of MPMS will combine with the staff of Dennis Middle School at a new facility and will be named Lee Central Middle School. With the leadership of Mrs. Deitra Johnson as principal, the school is in excellent hands.

Her instructional leadership skills as well as her human resources skills will be an asset as the new staff bonds and grows to become a new, vital learning community.



Produced and Edited by:

**The Office of Special Projects/Palmetto
Priority Schools**

*David Rawlinson, Director and the PPS
Staff*



Jasper County Schools

Ridgeland Middle School

The Ridgeland Middle School Community in Jasper County has experienced some spectacular events this last quarter of the 2008–09 school year. During the months of March, April, and May, many of our teachers took part in training on the use of our latest technology—Promethean boards. These teachers are now able to create interactive, technology-based lessons to increase student participation in the classroom.

Monday, April 6, was the date for our Gifted and Talented Fair. Students' works were displayed for friends and family to enjoy. Teachers and students joined to explain the process involved in the creations. We enjoyed samples of everything from pages of poetry to three-dimensional replicas of the great pyramids and Native American villages.

Saturday, May 2, a few of our beginner and a couple of our advanced band students traveled with our teacher of the year, Mrs. Christina J. Walker, to North Charleston to participate in the South Carolina Band Director's Association Solo and Ensemble Festival. Several of our students earned *Superior* ratings entitling them to receive medals to show off their accomplishments.

On Friday, May 5, a pep rally was held to encourage the students and staff for the upcoming PASS exams. The grade-level teams worked on individual cheers and dance routines to encourage each other. The culminating event was a basketball game between the students and staff members, including our fearless principal, Mr. Ranell Williams Jr. Surprising to many, the game ended with a tie.

Friday, May 22, marked a special rite of passage for our eighth-grade students. They enjoyed an evening of fun, food, and dancing at their spring formal. The students really enjoyed dressing up and celebrating. They also were treated to some of their teachers kicking up their heels!

It was over 90 degrees with beautiful, clear blue skies for our Olympic-themed, schoolwide field day on Friday, May 29. The day began with homeroom classes participating in a parade of nations. Each class chose a country to research and represent. Students then competed in

traditional events such as the 100 meter dash and some not so traditional ones as well. With the temperature in the mid 90s, many students enjoyed the water balloon relay the most!

The final week of school was very busy. We enjoyed recognizing the students' accomplishments and growth with an awards ceremony during the school day on June 2. Later that evening, our instrumental music students performed their spring concert with special guests—*The 3rd Battle Rhythm* ensemble of the 3rd Infantry Division Band based at Ft. Stewart, GA. A great time was had by all! We then celebrated our eighth graders one last time as we held a Bridging the Gap ceremony on Wednesday, June 3.

Our instructional coach, Karen Green Parker, rendered an outstanding message to the students. It is sad to say goodbye, but we are all so proud of how far they have come.

Great things continue to happen at Ridgeland Middle School in Jasper County!

Lastly, the staff members of RMS had the opportunity to participate in various professional development activities.

- ◆ In January, we had training on the following topics: How to Use the Promethean Board, Balanced Literacy, Open Book, Healthy School Climate, and Data Analysis.
- ◆ During the month of February, we participated in the following: Teaching Struggling Students, Single Gender, and all ELA teachers attended the SC International Reading Association.
- ◆ In the month of March, staff members had the following professional development opportunities: Using Data for Instruction, How to Use the Promethean Board, Healthy School Climate, Teaching Struggling Math Students, and Single Gender.

Great things are happening at Ridgeland Middle School in Jasper County!



Charleston County Schools

Stall High Honored for Leadership in Service

The Jefferson Awards—Deloitte Youth Services Initiative is proud to announce that R. B. Stall High School has been selected as the Charleston recipient for outstanding service by a high school and represented the city of Charleston at the National Ceremony Gala Event in Washington, DC, on June 15–17.

The Jefferson Award Youth Service Initiative is currently operating in over 125 high schools nationwide in eight regions. The mission of the Jefferson Awards is to honor Americans who have performed outstanding public service and to inspire others to follow their example.

The Youth Services Initiative (YSI) was created in partnership with Deloitte with the aggressive goal of helping to double volunteerism in America's high schools. The strategy is to create Jefferson Awards youth leadership teams in each high school that celebrate great volunteers, inspire others to get involved, and help raise additional resources to expand volunteer activities in the areas of need.

Jessica Brown, Preyal Patel, Samantha Perritte, Marlin Carrington, Akeem Young, Vanessa Sorto, William Sanders and JaRod Foster of Stall High School were honored for their outstanding service. Vanessa Sorto, William Sanders, JaRod Foster, faculty coordinator Sarah Earle, and Principal Dan Conner will travel to Washington, DC, and attend the Grand Gala event at Union Station.

Students were recently awarded the Jefferson Youth Services Banner by Michele Fidance, who flew in from Delaware to present the banner. The attendees at the ceremony included Mayor Summey, Mayor Riley, and Dr. McGinley.



Senior Happenings at North Charleston High School

The senior class at North Charleston High School in Charleston County has had a very special privilege this year—A Senior Lounge.

During their lunch period they can eat with their peers, network, and discuss their post high school intentions. Tiffany and Theodore Brinkley Senior Faculty Sponsors supervise the lounge and have some very positive things to say about its benefits. Students are provided with opportunities to socialize, discuss academics, and share their plans for their future.

According to the students, they enjoy the opportunity to share conversations and get to know each other on a more personal basis. Many of the students have used their time to assist each other in various academic areas. New friendships have been established and old ones reunited.

The seniors also made plans with the assistance of the Senior Class faculty sponsors Mr. and Mrs. Brinkley to visit the campuses of Francis Marion University, S. C. State University, Coastal Carolina University, and Winthrop University. During senior week, students took a field trip to Palmetto County Park and Carowinds. A senior breakfast was planned along with a senior dinner.

The 2009 Senior Class will present the school with a very special gift. This gift is unique in that it is not a material gift but a gift of time. The senior class has committed to volunteer over 2,100 hours of service. They will serve as mentors and volunteers over the next four years at North Charleston High. According to the Brinkley's, this is a gift that will touch the lives of all members of the school family and help North Charleston move to the next level of academic achievement.

Congratulations to the senior class of 2009 and to its dedicated sponsors Tiffany and Theodore Brinkley.



Charleston County Schools (Continued)

Burke Middle School

Program has teens build own computers: Academic gains are focus of tech-driven classes

Thirteen-year-old Margaret Wiwuga had never seen the inside of a computer until she started putting one together Tuesday.

She'll finish assembling it in a day or two, then use it daily in the TechBridge Academy, a summer technology and academic program sponsored by South Carolina State University.

If she shows up for every day of the five-week program, Monday through Thursday for seven hours each day, and completes it successfully, she will be able to take the computer home with her for free.

Margaret stared at the shell and pieces of her computer spread out on a desk in front of her. "It looks really advanced," she said of the machine.

She's one of 12 rising seventh- and eighth-graders enrolled at the program at Burke High School this summer. S.C. State also is offering the program at sites in Anderson, Dillon, Jasper, Orangeburg, and Sumter counties.

Elizabeth Mosely, communications coordinator for the university's research and extension programs, said the program's goal is to "improve academic performance through technology." Organizers also hope it will help bridge the digital divide.

To be accepted in the program, she said, students must have the basic skills to do the work, which includes improving reading and math skills; learning about future careers; and participating in a character education program that teaches them to be respectful and responsible. But motivated students who have some academic challenges also can enroll, Mosely said.

Henry Edwards, a rising eighth-grader from James Island Middle School, said, "We could really use this computer." Henry said he's always been interested in putting things

together. So the program appealed to him right away. By the end of the summer, he hopes to understand how computers work. That's knowledge he will use for the rest of his life, he said. And working on his academic skills over the summer will be good for him. Usually over the summer, "it kind of leaves you," he said.

Demier Richardson, the university's senior extension director, said students feel very proud when they tell others they are building their own computers.

The program has been running at different sites throughout the state for the past four years, she said. The university purchases the computers at a reduced cost from the Pennsylvania-based construction and engineering firm Henkels & McCoy. The program is paid with for with federal and state money.

Richardson said that when students take the computers home, they often teach younger siblings to use them. And they sometimes make the machines available to neighbors who need to use the Internet. She estimates that at least three other people will benefit from the program for each student who leaves with a computer.

Margaret said she's going to save all of the computer assembly instructions and show them to her dad. He loves to take things apart and put them back together. "He's going to ask me how I did it," she said.

Richardson said students get deeply engaged in the program, and in technology in general, by building their own computers. "The greatest joy is when they hit that power button" and begin using the machine they assembled. "They say to themselves, 'This is something I did on my own, now the sky is the limit.'"



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“Make no mistake, there are some real heroes working in these 16 schools. I know because I have met some of them, and we’re going to be counting on them in the months and years ahead.”

Dr. Jim Rex
State
Superintendent
of
Education

Allendale County Schools

Allendale Middle School

Under the leadership of first-year principal Brian Newsome, Allendale Middle accomplished many firsts! Of the most significant was that 80 percent of the student body made gains based on fall to spring MAP testing. Everyone is hopeful that this will transfer into gains on PASS. At the end of the school year, Mr. Newsome only had two faculty and staff positions that remained open. This was a feat given that he had approximately a dozen positions to fill!

On the last day of school, each student walked out with their schedule for the upcoming school year, complete with related arts classes. Students will also be placed in not only pre-algebra, Algebra, and English 1 classes next year but some will also be in "honors" classes imbedded into the master schedule based on spring MAP results. The master schedule was also designed to not only provide teachers with grade level and team-planning time but the opportunity to meet as departments each week as well.

Next year promises to be equally exciting and keeping Allendale Middle on its move upward with the addition of chorus and dance programs and a full-time band teacher as additions to its fine arts program. Mr. Newsome and the faculty have also been in discussion with David Chadwell of the SCDE about single-gender instruction for incoming sixth grades and specific related arts classes such as health and PE. The long-range goal is to implement this school-wide within the next two to three years. This will be the first single-gender program in the Allendale School District, which is one of the last districts in the state to implement such an innovative educational design.

It was thrilling and rewarding to be a part of all this excitement at Allendale Middle this year. Everyone needs to stay tuned, because Allendale Middle is just getting cranked up. We will soon see Allendale Middle as a leader among middle schools in our state!



A Glance at the Richland District 1

Gibbes Middle School

Gibbes Middle School's 2009–2010 Teacher of the Year, Mrs. Tonja Dantzler-Davis, is also a published writer. The book she has written contains a collection of poetry that portrays the author's experiences and trials after her spiritual conversion. The cumulative power of the writing of T. Dantzler-Davis offers each reader a way toward having a profoundly deep relationship with God as well as relating how her Savior made Himself real in her life. Each poem is preceded with a brief synopsis of how that piece came to be.

Also in the spotlight this summer are other teachers from Gibbes who were invited to present at the annual Summer Leadership Institute sponsored by the South Carolina Association of School Administrators in Myrtle Beach. Claudia Brooks, language arts teacher, presented a segment on data streaming. The session examined student performance using EdSoft and other strategies that led her and other teachers to success. She discussed how to distinguish skills that needed review from skills that require remediation. Ms. Brooks integrated technology with the use of the Classroom Performance System (CPS) to show how teachers can receive immediate feedback on student performance.

Lamont Britt, math teacher, presented a session on how to make the use of the most available technology to encourage classroom interaction. He gave participants the opportunity to examine the best use of SMART boards and the CPS that went beyond the norm. Participants were intrigued with the interactive section on dissection of a frog. The session truly appealed to the tactile-kinesthetic learner.

Congratulations to the Gibbes Middle School Eagles for soaring high!



Eau Claire High School

Richland One Student Named Gates Millennium Scholar

Theta Brown, a 2009 graduate of Eau Claire High School, has been named a Gates Millennium Scholar, a highly prestigious award that will pay the entire cost of her college education through graduation, including graduate school.

Brown is one of only eight Gates Millennium Scholars in South Carolina this year and the only one from Columbia.

The Gates Millennium Scholar Program is funded by a \$1 billion grant from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. Its goal is to provide an opportunity for outstanding minority students with significant financial need to attend college. According to the organization, Gates Millennium Scholar recipients have an average graduation rate of almost 80 percent, which is higher than the graduation rate for all college students and higher than the rate for high-income students.

This fall, Brown will enter Furman University as a biology major with her ultimate goal to become a cardiologist. She says this money is a blessing for her family because this fall her parents will have three children in college.

"I worked hard for this scholarship and my hard work paid off," said Brown. "I would encourage other Richland One students to always strive to be the best."

That advice is built upon years of focus and dedication by this amazing student. While at Eau Claire, Brown was class valedictorian, an Academic All-Star, a member of the National Honor Society, and a High School Scholar. But academics weren't her only interests. In addition to working part-time, Brown also was a member of the school marching band and Navy JROTC.

A Glance at the Richland District 1 (Continued)

C.A. Johnson Preparatory Academy

C.A. Johnson Preparatory Academy was the recipient of a 21st Century Community Learning Center grant. The program includes the following features:

Jumpstart—A ninth-grade transition intervention targeting students academically behind their age peers as measured by age and grade level. Its aim is to assess, target instructional deficits, and accelerate their progression toward graduation.

Intramural Sports—A program that will allow students who maintain acceptable behavioral and attendance records to participate in competitive team sports.

Standards Mastery and Enrichment—Students will be provided extended time to master core content standards and prepare for local, state, and national exams under the direction and supervision of certified instructors. Enrichment activities will be offered in the form of summer bridge camps for feeder school students in grades 5–8, leadership camps, academic completion camps, and advanced placement course prep camps. Camps and activities in the areas of engineering/robotics, interactive media, recording arts, and hair design will provide highly engaging, career-oriented experiences and opportunities for students to create, self-express, and acquire new or fine-tune existing skills.

Teen Parenthood and Family Literacy—Application of family literacy to facilitate the acquisition of more advanced skills for teen parents and their capacity to foster the development of their children's literacy skills.

Leadership Academy—The leadership component is designed to help students reconnect to the school community by expanding their knowledge base regarding effective leadership development; providing cultural, relevant, and enriching experiences beyond the students' school and community; providing meaningful collaborative opportunities for students to invest in their school community; and creating opportunities for students to recover academic credits and accelerate their program of study.

W.A. Perry Middle School

When Richland One announced that an outside individual would be assigned to each of its schools as "Principal for a Day," W.A. Perry was assigned a news reporter from *The State*. Ms. Click is in the business of someone who buys ink in fifty-gallon barrel drums, and this may have intimidated some people, but not the self-confident Demetria Clemons, principal of W.A. Perry, who is as equally self-confident in her school.

The day could not have gone better which is evident in the glowing article written by Ms. Click that appeared the following week in the Neighbors Section of *The State*. Some of the highlights of her article and day are things that all of us who have been administrators can relate to. From being shown the huge key ring with its many sets of keys to the two-minute instructional session on how to use the walkie talkie. As Ms. Click put it, "armed with these two important things, we were off." This of course was around 8:45 in the morning, when Ms. Click thought she had arrived on time and found that Ms. Clemons' day began about 1 1/2 hours before that! They attended many grade- and team-level meetings, a special ed meeting, and even a district meeting where budgeting and teacher furloughs were being discussed. This was all before noon. She quotes Ms. Clemmons rules for being a principal:

- Walk with a purpose.
- Keep conversations short.
- Be prepared with those power pumps and comfortable walking shoes.
- Never let them see you sweat.

Again, all the things that anyone who's ever been in a principal's shoes—literally—can identify with (except the power pumps for you gentlemen!) Ms. Click and Ms. Clemons even dropped in on me in the afternoon as I was holding a sixth-grade reading group session that I developed after looking at the PACT data for our incoming sixth grade. I was referred to as a "reading specialist" from the SCDE; however, I have learned you wear many hats as a PPSL!

Please view the entire article at
<http://www.thestate.com/132/index.html> > -
 <<http://www.thestate.com/159/index.html>

It is worth the click!

Alcorn Middle School Moves from Ordinary to Extraordinary—Go, Knights!

Alcorn Middle School's new principal, Dr. Baron A. Davis, declared that Alcorn would be moving from "ordinary to extraordinary." The faculty and staff embraced this new "vision," and Alcorn Middle School has made EXTRAORDINARY accomplishments.

At the beginning of the school year, the sixth-grade classroom guidance program focused on bullying and harassment through a school-wide study of the book *The Bully*. Alcorn's Parent and Community Involvement Coordinator, James Bryant, III, organized a clothes closet initiative including donating coats, "hoodies," jackets, and other apparel for our students. The annual school-wide community service project, a drive to collect canned-food, followed with homeroom classes competing, and the "Lights on After School Project" was held. In October, several pre-identified eighth graders were administered the PSAT with 100 percent participation. The Man 2 Man Program, a male motivational and mentoring program, was instituted.

Using *The Wish Giver* as an anchor text, Ms. Guess and Mrs. Walker, English teacher and reading specialist respectively, hosted a tea party to provide exposure and connections for the students. The staging of a mock presidential election was held in the media center. Using the eChalk survey tool, after reviewing polling and voting guidelines, students served as poll workers and voters and received voter registration forms and cards.

Students in Mrs. Myers-Jones' social studies classes also held mock elections with then Senator Barack Obama being declared the presidential winner.

Students received several awards, as a result of their excellence in academics and behavior. Students who did not receive any disciplinary referrals during the month of December were invited to a Christmas Dance. In the area of math and science, a Parent Night was held in November, and science fair projects were due on December 15. During the parent night, parents and students rotated through four stations: Study Skills, Test-Taking Skills, Technology, and Mad Science. Door prizes were also given. Students participated in a holiday card contest to demonstrate their creative talents. The winners' cards were used to send holiday greetings to the District Superintendent and his staff,

board members, partners and friends of the Extended Day Program, and other stakeholders.

In February, students and staff experienced EUREKA. They moved into their brand new school facility, taking the leap from old to new, outdated to updated, and dilapidated to pristine. Further, in recognition of their dedication and exemplary commitment, Charlotte Morgan and James Bryant, III, were voted Teacher of the Year and Classified Employee of the year, respectively.

Other activities included celebration of the National African American Read-in Chain, with guest readers from the community reading to students. The social studies department, in collaboration with the English department, hosted Parents' Night. Performances included poems, recitations, rap songs, PowerPoint presentations, and essay readings. Test data interpretation for PACT/PASS and MAP test instruments were reviewed by Dr. Davis. A Richland County public librarian was available for library card registration, and Alcorn's media specialist, Ms. Carson, presented an update on new book arrivals. A spaghetti dinner with trimmings was served, and door prizes were given. A record number of parents and other stakeholders was in attendance.

As the school year ended, the Spring Concert showcased the chorus, band, and orchestra. Parents participated in an open house showcasing our new buildings. Alcorn Middle School's faculty, staff, and students were elated upon learning that they met ALL FOUR FOCUSED SCHOOL RENEWAL GOALS, which meant that all students scored at least 50 percent or better on benchmark tests. Finally, there was a tremendous increase in student performance on the end-of-course tests in Algebra I, increasing from approximately 45 percent to 72 percent passage rate. Alcorn Middle School is indeed moving from ordinary to extraordinary. Yes, high expectations lead to high performances and transform the ordinary to extraordinary. Go, Knights!



Alcorn Middle School

Message from the Director of the Palmetto Priority Schools

Greetings,

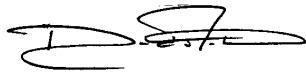
It is my sincere hope that all of you will find some time to relax and enjoy your families and loved ones this summer. The last twelve months have been filled with many challenges. These challenges have required us to do more with less and plan for our future endeavor with budgets that are extremely fluid.

I would be remiss in my integrity if I did not commend each of you for a yeoman's job during the 2008–09 school year. During this school year, you made remarkable progress while managing unprecedented budget cuts mandated by the state. The students in your individual schools were the beneficiaries of your innovative, creative, resourceful leadership. My hat is off to all of you.

The 2009–10 school year is marching swiftly toward us with as many challenges as 2008–09 presented us. The stimulus funds will provide two years of temporary relief of some fiscal issues that promise to persist long after the stimulus funds have disappeared. Therefore, it is incumbent upon all of us to start immediately to identify additional resources to sustain any and all programs and initiatives in all of the schools we serve.

I wish for you a super year. Remember, "In order to grow, you must love truth more than your own opinion."

Respectfully,



David Rawlinson
Office of Special Projects
Palmetto Priority Schools

Florence District Four

Johnson Middle School



Robert McDonald, Principal at Johnson Middle School, thanks a parent volunteer for assisting with an ice cream social to thank students for their hard work during the PASS test.



Teachers, administrators, and parent volunteers serve students ice cream sundaes after lunch to thank them for their hard work and perseverance during the PASS test.



Robert McDonald, Principal at Johnson Middle School in Timmonsville, addresses a crowd of well over 200 parents and students at the school's annual Family PASS Night. Family PASS Night, which was held on April 27, gave parents an opportunity to gain information about the upcoming PASS test. Teachers from each content area provided parents with handouts and practice test items. At the conclusion of the evening, all were treated to a wonderful meal.